BY SANTOSH GNANAKAN

Bangalore has never had it so good. We've been to concerts ranging from bhangra-pop to jazz and from classical music to good ol' rock. It has truly been a feast. Two groups of differing styles were in town within the space of a week and we had the opportunity to not only listen to their music, but also talk to them.

The feedback from Amin Hammoudi's Fender Strat guitar screamed in defiance, as Max Antoni on the drums and Michael Roing on electric bass cranked their engines. The audience at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, not knowing what to expect, sat back in awe as Navajiva from Germany rocked and grooved. This was music with an attitude that Bangalore has rarely seen before. A change from the commercial stuff we tragically grow used to. "We don't play covers at our concerts," said guitarist and lead vocalist Amin before the show, "and this has helped our development as a band."

The search for the right-sounding band name often results in a weak attempt at sounding profound and trippy. Sometimes it works. "It was a coincidence, but 'Navajiva' sounded good and when we found out the meaning, we decided that this is it," recalls Amin. Playing together for a mere three years and yet able to sound together shows the obvious potential for a young band. They've just released their first album Remote Controlled (it's in English; they don't sing in German) which hasn't even been released there.

"Jimi Hendrix is my all-time favourite guitar player," says Amin, as was evident from his innovative use of the wah wah. Roing's driving and inventive bass work, along with Antoni's sheer force on the drums provided the perfect foundation for funky guitar riffs. One doesn't normally associate the cello with rock music, but Claudia, the fourth member of the band brings completion to the sound of Navajiva. Claudia is a trained award-winning classical musician and was playing for an orchestra before the call of the wild beckoned her. Navajiva's originality and attitude is a lesson for bands today. They've also got youth on their side—Amin and Roing are 23-years-old, while Antoni and Claudia are only 20.

Little Child had a Red Chilli Peppers feel to it, while Angel (not intended to be a Hendrix tribute), Space Cowboy, Just a Second and the other songs Navajiva churned out showed elements of funk and rock.

Not wanting to be outdone, Bangalore's finest showed their true colours when members of the audience tried to get on stage during the show. One stoned individual earnestly requested a song by the Doors, while another presented Claudia with a flower. A few others tried to play the Germans' instruments. Nobody appeared to be in charge, nor did anybody appear to care and Amin's pleas to the more active members of the audience fell on deaf ears.

Nevertheless, the music prevailed, before goons arrived and drove everyone away. But the

one question almost everybody had on their minds as they left was, “Where can I buy the Navajiva CD?”